



Memory: 76

★ Tsukigami ★



I'VE LOVED
MARTIAL
ARTS
SINCE I
WAS LITTLE.



EVEN
BEFORE I CAN
REMEMBER I
WOULD GET MY
MOM TO TAKE
ME TO THE
LOCAL DOJO.



WHENEVER
WE WENT
THERE GAZING
AT THEM ALL
DAY LONG.



I SHOULDN'T
HAVE GOTTEN
OFF WITH A
MERE SCRATCH,
BUT I WAS
MIRACULOUSLY
UNHARMED.



IT WAS ON
ONE OF THOSE
DAYS THAT I
TRIPPED AND
FELL DOWN THE
STONE STAIRS.



BECAUSE
THIS HAIR
PROTECTED
ME, I DIDN'T
GET HURT.



AND THEN
WHEN I
ALMOST FELL
OFF A CLIFF
WHILE PICKING
MUSHROOMS



IT WAS A
LITTLE SCARY
THAT I HAD
HAIR THAT
COULD MOVE
ON ITS OWN...
BUT I WAS
THANKFUL THAT
IT SAVED ME.



ONCE I STARTED
PRACTICING
MARTIAL ARTS,
SOMETIMES I
COULD FORGET
THAT I HAD
"MOVING HAIR".



I LEARNED I
COULD MOVE IT
MYSELF IF I
ASKED IT NICELY,
BUT... IT WAS
STILL KIND
OF SCARY.



HOWEVER...

I'M
IRENE HARDIN,
OF THE FIST OF
THE LUSTROUS
HUANG.



YES, OF
COURSE~!

I HEARD
YOU'RE THE
STRONGEST
ONE IN THE
KIDS' GROUP
HERE! I CAME
TO REQUEST
A MATCH!

BUT SHE HELD
BACK A LITTLE,
AND THANKS
TO THAT WE
WERE ABLE TO
HAVE FUN
PRACTICING
TOGETHER.



IRENE, THE
HEIRESS TO
THE FIST OF
THE LUSTROUS
HUANG, WAS
STRONG FROM A
YOUNG AGE.



ALL
RIGHT!
I'LL
GIVE IT A
SHOT!



I'M
GOING TO BE
A BIT SERIOUS
TODAY—I DON'T
HOLD BACK
AND HIT ME AS
HARD AS YOU
CAN, OKAY
TAO?

THE INCIDENT
HAPPENED
DURING MY
THIRD MATCH
WITH HER.



IRENE WAS
TRULY AMAZING
WHEN SHE
WAS SERIOUS.





I WAS
AFRAID.



IN THE
FACE
OF HER
SKILLS



ELIMINATED
THE "THREAT"
IN FRONT OF
MY EYES.



MY HAIR,
THAT HAD
NEVER DONE
ANYTHING
LIKE THIS
UP TO NOW



WHAT
JUST
HAPPENED
...?

MIS-
TRESS!

MISTRESS,
YOU CAN'T!
WE HAVE
TO TREAT
YOUR
WOUNDS
FIRST...

THAT WAS
A CHEAP SHOT,
SO THAT ONE
DOESN'T COUNT!
WE'RE HAVING
ANOTHER MATCH
RIGHT NOW!

IT WAS
NOTHING! HER
HAIR SUDDENLY
SLASHED AT ME
IN THE MIDDLE
OF THE MATCH
AND SURPRISED
ME IS ALL!

MISTRESS,
WHAT
JUST...!?

HER
HAIR...?

IT WAS
DEFINITELY
TAO'S
HAIR...

BUT MORE
IMPORTANTLY, MY
VISION WAS DOMINATED
BY THE SIGHT OF
IRENE, WHO I'D BEEN
HAPPILY CHATTING WITH
JUST MOMENTS BEFORE,
NOW BATTERED AND
FURIOUS.

MY GAZE WAS
FILLED WITH
THE ONLOOKING
ADULT'S SAYING,
"SHE USED AN
UNDERHANDED
ATTACK."



SHORTLY
AFTER, BEFORE
I COULD
SHAKE OFF
THE SHOCK,
SHE STARTED
FOR ME

AND
MY HAIR
GREETED
HER IN
KIND.





I HEARD THERE
WAS A BIG LIPICAR
NOT ONLY BECAUSE
THEIR HONORED
GUEST, IRRENE HAD
SUFFERED TERRIBLE
INJURIES, BUT
ALSO THE
ADULTS AS WELL.



BECAUSE
OF WHAT
HAPPENED
THAT DAY, I
WAS BANNED
FROM THE
DOJO.



AND BECAUSE
I HAD USED
SOME UNKNOWN
"TECHNIQUE", I
DAMAGED THE
DOJO'S HONOR.



THIS
HAIR
HAD
CERTAINLY
PROTECTED
ME



BUT IT WAS
STILL A CURSE
THAT TOOK
WHAT I
LOVED AWAY
FROM ME.



THAT'S
WHY I...



7
COUNT...
8...

I DID IT
AGAIN...!?
CORONA-SAN!



I THOUGHT I
COULD HANDLE IT
THE SECOND TIME,
BUT... IT WAS
CLOSE, BUT YOU
STILL GOT ME!

CORONA-
SAN!!



I'M FINE-

LET'S
STOP... YOU'RE
REALLY
GOING TO GET
HURT...



9... I'M
STANDING!



WATCHING
THE BATTLE
OUTSIDE...

H-M SHE
SAW THROUGH
ME, HUH... I
GUESS THERE
WASN'T ANY POINT
TO BORROWING
OTTO-KUN'S
NECKTIE?

HM?
ASSISTANT
INSTRUCTOR?



THIS MATCH
WAS SET UP BY
COACH AND THE
ASSISTANT
INSTRUCTOR...
IF SHE HASN'T
STOPPED IT YET,
THEN IT MUST
BE OKAY TO
CONTINUE!



I DON'T
THINK SO AT ALL.
THERE'S SO MUCH
YOU CAN DO WITH
IT, SO I THINK IT'S
A REALLY GOOD
TECHNIQUE.

GORDON-SAN...
YOU DON'T
THINK THAT
USING THESE
IS UNFAIR?



DO YOU
HATE IT,
TAO-SAN?
YOUR OWN
HAIR?



BECAUSE
I HAVE THIS
TSUKIGAMI...
I CAN'T PRACTICE
MARTIAL ARTS.
BECAUSE I'D
HURT PEOPLE...



USING THESE
WEAPONS, EVEN
THOUGH I'M A
MARTIAL ARTIST...
EVEN IF I'M NOT
MOVING THEM
MYSELF.



UM... IN
THAT CASE, WHAT
YOU'RE WORRIED
ABOUT IS PRETTY
CLOSE TO ONE OF
MY SENIORS.



SHE PRACTICES
HAND-TO-HAND
COMBAT TOO, AND IN
OUR COMPETITIONS
SHE'S THE WORLD
CHAMPION. SHE'S A
REALLY AMAZING
PERSON.



AND... I
KNOW IT'S
RUDE TO
SAY THIS,
BUT



IF YOU'D
LIKE, MAYBE I
CAN GET HER
TO TALK TO YOU
SOMETIME?
SHE'S A REALLY
WARM, FRIENDLY
PERSON!



I THINK
IT'S A VERY
IMPRESSION
TECHNIQUE,
BUT... I
THINK I'VE
GOT IT DOWN
NOW.

THAT
MOVE ISN'T
THAT
CHEAP.



THAT'S...



I THINK
SO TOO!



AND IF
I WIN THIS
MATCH JUST
LIKE THIS...
WOULDN'T IT AT
LEAST PROVE
THAT YOUR
HAIR ISN'T
"UNFAIR"?







AND THAT
HAS TO BE
BECAUSE I'M
THE BEST
MATCH FOR
HER!

THERE'S A
REASON COACH
NOVE AND ASSISTANT
INSTRUCTOR RINNA
CHOSE ME TO BE
TAO-SAN'S OPPONENT
OVER VIVO, RIO, OR
EVEN MIURA-SAN.



WEAK
POINT
NO. 1!



BECAUSE
IT'S "A WEAPON
THAT EXTENDS
FROM THE BASE",
IT GIVES UP
EASILY WITH SOME
DISTANCE!



Rock Bind!

WEAK
POINT
NO. 2!



THE
SHARPNESS
AND SPEED IS
THE WEAPON'S
LIFE BLOOD, SO
COVERING IT
WITH ROCKS OR
ICE WILL CUT ITS
EFFECTIVENESS
IN HALF!



FULL
ROCK!

THE
PARTS THAT
STRETCHED
THE FARTHEST
ARE EASY TO
BIND TOO...





**KNUCKLE
BREAK!**



YEP.
CORONA-CHAN
SCORES A
FULL 100
POINTS.

WAY TO
GO!

YEAH!



THAT
PROVES IT'S
NOT POSSESSION,
A CURSE, OR
ANYTHING OCCULT
LIKE THAT. TAO
HERSELF IS
USING A SORT OF
MANIPULATION
MAGIC.



AH—
IT DID.

TAKE A
LOOK, WHEN
TAO FULLY LOST
CONSCIOUSNESS
THE HAIR STOPPED
MOVING



MANIPULATION
MAGIC IS COMPLICATED.
IT USES A LOT OF
MAGICAL RESOURCES,
SO IF YOU USE IT AT
HIGH-CAPACITY ALL OF
A SUDDEN LIKE THAT,
YOU'LL FEEL DIZZY AS
IF YOU WERE LOSING
CONSCIOUSNESS.



WELL,
I AM YOUR
ASSISTANT
INSTRUCTOR.

U-H,
HOW DO
YOU KNOW
ALL THIS
STUFF?



IF YOU'RE
TRYING TO MASTER
MANIPULATION MAGIC,
THEN IT'S SOMETHING
YOU'LL EXPERIENCE A
LOT, OF COURSE, THE
GOLEM MASTER
CORONA-CHAN IS NO
EXCEPTION.



IT'S TRUE!
THE ASSISTANT
INSTRUCTOR!
THAT'S SOME SUPER
SKIN-WHITENING
MAKE-UP! WOW~!

HOHOHO.
IT'S WELL
DONE,
ISN'T IT?



HERE,
TAKE A
GOOD LOOK.
IT'S ME,
RINNA.

HHMM?



AND THEN
THERE'S THE
FACT THAT
TAO HERSELF
ATTRIBUTES
SOME SORT OF
PERSONALITY
OR WILL TO
HER HAIR.



I DID,
BUT SHE
WOULDN'T
LISTEN.

BUT ASSISTANT
INSTRUCTOR! YOU
SHOULD'VE JUST
TOLD TAO
ALL THAT STUFF
YOURSELF!



SINCE
IT'S ROOTED
AS A DEFENSIVE
REFLEX, IT WON'T
BE SIMPLE TO
CHANGE...



EVEN THOUGH THE PERSON HERSELF, IRENE, HAS ALWAYS SAID SHE WANTED TAO TO RETURN TO THE PATH OF MARTIAL ARTS.



SH!? SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED!?

HER OLD DOJO SAID SHE SOLED MARTIAL ARTS, AND SHE DID INJURE IRENE... THOSE EVENTS MUST HAVE BEEN TRAUMATIC FOR HER.



I'M SURE THEY KEPT IT A SECRET BECAUSE YOU'RE THEIR BEST FRIENDS. THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU TO WORRY.

HOW COULD IRENE AND TAO KEEP THAT FROM US, THEIR BEST FRIENDS!? IF WE HAD KNOWN, WE...



ALL WE CAN DO IS JUST GIVE HER THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THAT CHOICE.



"WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?" IS SOMETHING TAO HAS TO DECIDE FOR HERSELF.





AND YOU CAN
OBSERVE
OUR
TRAINING
SESSIONS
AS MUCH
AS YOU
WANT!

FOR
NOW, YOU
CAN STAY HERE
AND HELP WITH
THE HOUSEWORK
WHILE YOU
GIVE IT SOME
NICE, LONG
THOUGHT.



I
UNDERSTAND
YOUR
CIRCUMSTANCES
AND YOUR
DESIRE NOT TO
PRACTICE
MARTIAL ARTS
ANYMORE.



BUT I
FEEL THAT
DECISION
MAY HAVE
BEEN MADE
IN WASTE.



I FIRMLY
BELIEVE
I'LL HAVE
THE CHANCE
TO FIGHT
YOU AGAIN
SOMEDAY.



IT WAS
MY MISTAKE TO
ACCUSE YOU OF
CHEATING WITHOUT
KNOWING THE
CIRCUMSTANCES.

I LOVE MARTIAL ARTS.
I LOVE MATCHES.



BUT FOR
SOMEONE LIKE ME
WITH THIS CHEAP,
UNFAIR CURSE THAT
HURTS PEOPLE

I THOUGHT
THOSE WORDS
COULD NEVER
PASS MY LIPS.





MAYBE
THE CHEAP,
UNFAIR ONE...
WAS HE ALL
ALONG.



EVEN
THOUGH YOU
PROTECTED ME,
I PRETENDED
LIKE YOU HURT
ME. AND THOUGH
YOU GAVE ME
WHAT I WANTED,
I JUST KEPT
RUNNING
AWAY.



COME ON!
LET'S GO,
TAO-SAN!



I'M
SORRY...
BUT IT'S
ALL RIGHT
NOW.



YOU WERE...
JUST GIVING
ME WHAT MY
HEART DESIRED,
WEREN'T YOU?



THE THINGS
THAT HURT,
THE THINGS I
REGRET... AND
THE THINGS
I LOVE!

I WON'T
RUN AWAY
FROM THEM
ANYMORE!





VIVID CHAPTER 76

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